

FIELD STUDY COURSE, FAR NORTH 11 - 18 JANUARY, 1971

By A. T. EDGAR

The object of the Course was to study the bird life of Aupouri and Karikari Peninsulas. Headquarters was at Houhora Hall, property of Mr. Fred Evans, to whom the Society is grateful for permission to camp on his farm, and for all he did to make the hall and surrounds ready for the course. A stove and refrigerator were temporarily installed; tables and benches from Raio Hall were kindly lent by Mr. Bert Wagener. Mr. Ian Foster, Houhora Hotel, was outstandingly and continuously helpful throughout. His local knowledge and advice were invaluable in the preparatory stages; he arranged that we should draw perishable stores from the hotel as required, allowed use of his cool store, telephone, water supply and some utensils. Two local ladies, Mrs. Buckton and Mrs. Wilson, undertook the task of cooking the meat (about 45 lbs. per day) and provided a superb fish dinner on Friday. The Society is indeed grateful to these ladies not only for the work they did on our behalf but also for the excellent fare provided. Mrs. Fooks and Miss Coles kindly came north two days before the course started to help with arrangements, organised the daily roster of kitchen duties and did yeoman work on break-up day. Terence and Dale Calvert came as advance party, put in a lot of useful preliminary work and were a great help during the course because of their local knowledge, acquired on many previous visits to the area in search of swallows, waders and storm-cast specimens. Richard Veitch (Wildlife) provided some tentage and utensils and was an ever-present help in organisation and camp chores.

We are grateful to Mr. Sankey for a memorable launch trip to Rangiputa Bank; to Mr. Clarry Hoggard for the loan of a dinghy at Kaimaumau; to Messrs. Pip Smith and Bill Wegener for boat and barge transport on Houhora harbour; to Mr. Armstrong (Te Kao school) for help in organising a visit to Great Exhibition Bay; to Mr. Dalbeth for permission to use his road to North Cape; to the Managers of Lands and Survey blocks for permission to travel over their land, and to private landowners for their courtesy and co-operation. We are particularly grateful to Te Hapua 42 Committee for their permission to enter the Corporation's land to study plant and bird life, and to Mr. A. H. Watt, a foundation member of O.S.N.Z. and an old resident of Te Kao, for his advice and guidance in the planning stages. Mr. H. Crene, Ranger, Te Paki Station, was most helpful. Mr. Vincent (Northern Age, Kaitaia) provided valuable press coverage and we were glad to welcome him when he visited the camp and met some of the members.

Telegrams of good wishes were received from Maida and Charles Barlow, Invercargill, and from Hetty and Ross McKenzie, Clevedon. The thoughts of all members were with Hetty and Ross as they celebrated their Golden Wedding; we missed them.

A feature of the course was the large proportion of young members who attended. Long summer days and good, if somewhat windy, weather were in our favour, and everyone had plenty of exercise. Evening meal was (theoretically) at 7 p.m.; provision had been made for evening talks and slides; but it soon became apparent that by the time dinner was over there was little time or inclination for activities other than discussion of the day's doings or the next day's programme.

Few members had previous knowledge of the Far North, so an attempt was made to create opportunity for everyone to get a good general idea of the area and its points of special interest, while contributing to the main objects of mapping scheme, beach patrol scheme and general study of the bird population. Mr. Ross Michie conducted botanical parties to Kerr Point and other interesting areas.

The following took part in the course:—

Northland — D. Calvert, W. Campbell, A. T. Edgar, Mrs. M. Hows, Miss E. Madgwick, R. H. Michie, A. M. Munro, Mrs. P. G. Smith; by invitation, M. Kennedy, G. B. Rawlings.

Auckland — K. Bond, T. R. Calvert, S. P. Chamberlin, Miss J. Coles, Mrs. G. J. Eller, Mrs. P. Fooks, M. Galbraith, P. M. Gross, Miss E. Hosken, Miss J. Key-Jones, Mrs. W. Mitchell, Miss B. Pike, Mrs. S. M. Reed, G. P. Robinson, C. F. Senior, R. B. Sibson, Mrs. E. Spragg, C. R. Veitch, T. Walker, A. Wilkins.

South Auckland — F. Barwell, Mr., Mrs. and Mason Brown, Miss S. Fogarty, Mr. and Mrs. T. Harty.

Volcanic Plateau — R. S. Cowan, T. Rose.

Wanganui — Mr. and Mrs. D. Crockett, M. F. O'Shea.

Wellington — J. A. Bartle, Dr. Elsie Gibbons, Mr. and Mrs. B. D. Heather and family, Miss A. Hutson, F. C. Kinsky, Miss M. Logan, Mrs. H. Oliver, Mr. and Mrs. R. S. Slack.

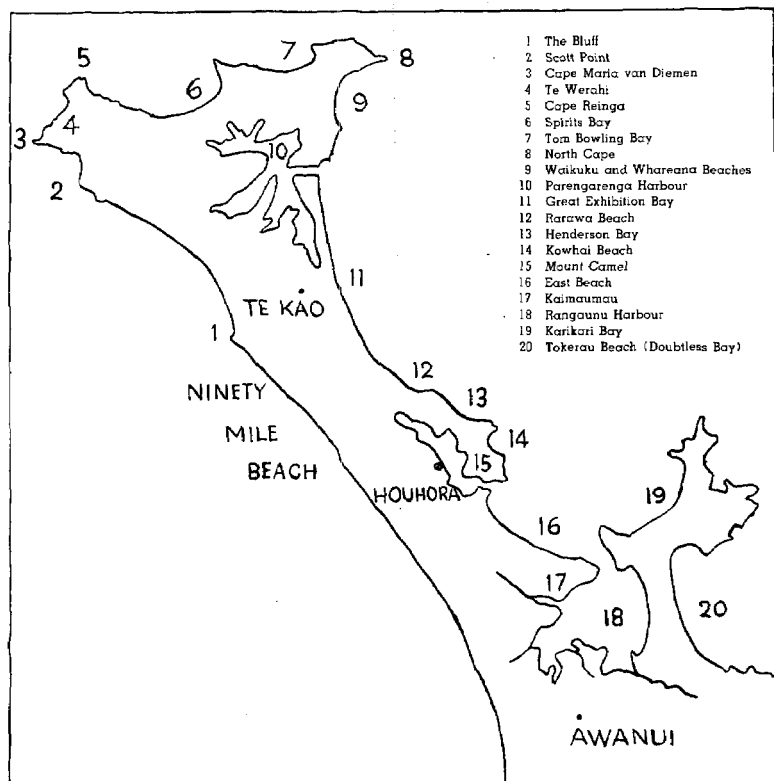
Marlborough — R. Holdaway.

Canterbury — Mr. and Mrs. A. Baker.

TOPOGRAPHY

As the crow flies, the distance from Awanui to Cape Reinga is about 55 miles, from Cape Maria van Diemen to North Cape about 21 miles. Ninety Mile Beach is in fact about 58 miles long, and is backed by sand dunes. East of the dune belt the soil is mainly consolidated sand with peaty gumlands and seasonal swamps. Towards Cape Reinga and North Cape the soil type changes to red brown loams and brown clays, broken country under scrub and some residual bush rising to peaks of over 1000 ft., with stretches of rugged coastline between sandy bays. Opposite Houhora the isolated Mount Camel rises to 774 ft. Of recent years a large part of Aupouri Peninsula has been grassed and carries stock; similar development continues in the area south of Spirits Bay. A programme of afforestation is underway on the dunelands.

The soil of the flat land on Karikari Peninsula is broadly speaking similar to that east of the Aupouri dune belt; formerly under scrub and fern, much of the area is now grassed. The north-eastern tip of the peninsula is broken country rising to over 500 ft., with a rugged coastline.



I am grateful to Mrs. Welch, Kerikeri, for drawing the map.

On Aupouri Peninsula there are numerous small lakes in the dune belt and three larger lakes, Wahakari (west of Te Kao), Waiparera (west of Rangaunu harbour) and Ngatu (west of Awanui). On Karikari Peninsula Lake Ohia (dry in summer) is at the south end and lakes Waiporohita and Rotokawau in the north-west.

MAPPING SCHEME

Time did not permit a detailed search of every 10,000-yard map square in the area, but daily lists were completed for squares visited by each party and some individuals; in this way all 32 map squares were recorded, some of them several times over. From these daily lists record sheets were prepared and sent to Dr. P. C. Bull.

Under List of Species, the number of squares in which certain species were found is given as some indication of relative abundance. In this connection please note that five of the 32 map squares include only a small area of beach or headland, the rest of the square being salt water.

BEACH PATROLS

All beaches were patrolled and beach patrol cards completed for despatch to the organiser by individual members. In the following summary (and in the List of Species) "Northern Block" includes beaches from Scott Point round the north coast to Parengarenga north head, and "East Coast" those from Parengarenga south head to Karikari Bay and Tokerau Beach.

	90 Mile Beach	Northern Block	East Coast	Total
Blue Penguins	55	11	28	94
Albatrosses	18	3	4	25
Petrels	20	10	8	38
Prions	1	9	6	16
Shearwaters	78	53	47	178
Diving Petrels	12	13	37	62
Others	33	22	23	78
Total Birds	217	121	153	491
Miles	58	23	57	138
Birds per mile	3.7	5.3	2.7	3.6

WADERS

For various reasons it was decided not to attempt a simultaneous count on three harbours on a given day, but the figures given in the species list represent the maximum reliable count of each species in each area during the week and provide a fair picture of the local wader population at that time. 11,750 waders were recorded in harbours, on beaches and around lakes; of these 10,030 were arctic waders. In January the late summer build-up of New Zealand breeding waders was under way but still well below maximum. Experience has shown that the arctic wader population of Parengarenga and Rangaunu harbours fluctuates considerably during each season. For example, Whimbrel may be present in fair numbers during the southward migration but few are seen during the summer months; rare stragglers tend to show up at Parengarenga mostly during the period of northward migration.

The traditional roosts at Kaiata and Raumanawa are still used; but of recent years many waders prefer to roost on the flat land near Paua, formerly not suitable for this purpose because it was under low scrub but now transformed into grass paddocks (v. Notornis 10, 92). Waders which feed in Houhora harbour fly over the sandhills to a high tide roost on the east coast at Kowhai Beach. In Rangaunu harbour the main roost is Rangiputa bank, near the heads and offshore from Kaimaumau.

LIST OF SPECIES

In order that this report may be useful for reference by those who attended the course and those who will visit the area in future, the annotated list includes species identified during the course and also other species (marked *) not met with in January 1971, but recorded from the area. References are given where necessary, those

from *Notornis* thus — (4:122). Unpublished records drawn from recording scheme files or private notebooks include the initials of the observer, as follows:—

D.E.C.	D. E. Calvert	H.R.McK.	H. R. McKenzie
T.R.C.	T. R. Calvert	R.H.M.	R. H. Michie
A.T.E.	A. T. Edgar	S.R.	Mrs. S. Reed
G.E.	Mrs. G. Eller	K.R.	Mrs. K. Reynolds
H.A.F.	H. A. Findlay	G.R.	G. Robinson
A.G.	Miss A. Goodwin	M.R.	M. Ross
M.H.	Mrs. M. Hows	J.H.S.	Dr. J. H. Seddon
E.M.	Miss Elizabeth Madgwick	L.W.	Mrs. L. Wagener

Where not otherwise described, localities are identified by letters:—

N = Ninety Mile Beach

P = Parengarenga

H = Houhora

R = Rangaunu

or by numbers in brackets (1) - (20), corresponding with the numbers on the sketch map.

B.P. = Beach Patrol specimen.

Two papers, Birds of Parengarenga Harbour and Farthest North, A. H. Watt, 1947, *Notornis* 2: 115-120, and Notes on Parengarenga Harbour Waders, E. G. Turbott, 1951, *Notornis* 4: 122-134, are of particular interest. Read in conjunction with this report, they focus attention on some changes which have taken place in the bird population of the Far North during the last twenty years.

Northern Blue Penguin *Eudyptula minor*. Breeds on rocky parts of the northern and eastern coastline and inside Parengarenga harbour opposite the entrance (2:115). Dead birds, see B.P. Summary. An unusually heavy mortality occurred in March 1967, when 163 dead birds were counted on ten miles of beach (16). January 1971, (9) one nest; (20, south end) 5 nests, one adult, two downy chicks.

*New Zealand Dabchick *Podiceps rufopectus*. Formerly occurred sparingly on a number of small lakes (2:115). No recent records, but systematic search of dune lakes may show that the species is still present.

Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*. B.P., N, 10; (11), one; total 11. Fragmentary remains of four large albatrosses (*exulans* or *epomophora*) were found on beaches (9), (12) and (16).

Black-browed Mollymawk *D. melanophris*. B.P. N, one; (9), one; total, two.

Grey-headed Mollymawk *D. chrysostoma*, B.P., N, 3.

*Yellow-nosed Mollymawk *D. chlororhynchus*, observed at sea off North Cape (Oliver, 1955).

Buller's Mollymawk *D. bulleri*, B.P., N, 3.

White-capped Mollymawk *D. cauta cauta*, B.P., N, 2.

*Salvin's Mollymawk *D. cauta salvini*, B.P., N, January 1967, one (A.T.E.).

*Light-mantled Sooty Albatross *Phoebastria palpebrata*, B.P., N, August 1962, two (A.T.E.); (16), September 1970, one (D.E.C.).

Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus*, B.P., N, 3; (7), one; (9), one; total 5.

Cape Pigeon *Daption capensis*, B.P., N, 2; (7), one; total 3. A live bird was seen in Parengarenga harbour on 5/7/69 and one at the heads on 6/9/70 (A.T.E.).

[*Snow Petrel *Pagodroma nivea*, N. unconfirmed report of a sighting, 29/5/70, by Peter Voisin, H.M.N.Z.S. Lachlan, who has spent three seasons in Antarctica (E.M.).]

Grey-faced Petrel *Pterodroma macroptera*, B.P., N, 6; (6), one; (9), 2; (11), 4; (13), one. Total 14.

White-headed Petrel *P. lessoni*, B.P., N. one; (20), one; total 2.

Mottled Petrel *P. inexpectata*, B.P., N, one.

*Kerguelen Petrel *P. brevirostris*, B.P., (16), 6/9/70, one (D.E.C.).

Pycroft's Petrel *P. pycrofti*, B.P., N, one.

Cook's Petrel *P. cooki*, B.P., N, 2; (9), one; (11), one; total 4.

Lesser Broad-billed Prion *Pachyptila salvini*, B.P., (6), one.

Antarctic Prion *P. desolata*, B.P., (9), two, one of which identified as *banksi*.

*Narrow-billed Prion *P. belcheri*, B.P., N, August 1962, one (A.T.E.).

Fairy Prion *P. turtur*, B.P., N, one; (6), one; (9), 5; (11), 5; (13), one; total 13.

Of recent years few prions other than *turtur* have been found on northern beaches. It may be that the northern limit of the big storm wrecks ends to the south of Reef Point, at the southern end of Ninety Mile Beach.

Grey Petrel *Procellaria cinerea*, B.P., N, one.

White-chinned Petrel *P. aequinoctalis*, B.P., N, 2; (14), one; total 3.

Flesh-footed Shearwater *Puffinus carneipes*, B.P., N, 11; (11), one; (13), one; total 13. Seen offshore, Karikari Peninsula.

Buller's Shearwater *P. bulleri*, B.P., N, 11; (7), one; (9), 8; (11), 6; (13), one; (20), one; total 28.

Numerous at sea off Paxton Point (Great Exhibition Bay) and off the coast of Karikari Peninsula.

Sooty Shearwater *P. griseus*, B.P., N, 32; (6), 3; (7), one; (9), 23; (11), 18; (12), one; (13), one; (20), 3; total, 82.

Short-tailed Shearwater *P. tenuirostris*, B.P., N, one; (6), one; (7), one; (9), 2; total 5.

Fluttering Shearwater *P. gavia*, B.P., N, 23; (6), one; (7), 3; (9), 7; (11), one; (13), 3; (14), 4; (20), 6; total 50. Large numbers seen offshore, Karikari Peninsula and Rangaunu Bay.

*Little Shearwater *P. assimilis*, B.P., (6), 12/11/67, one (A.T.E.).

White-faced Storm Petrel *Pelagodroma marina*, B.P., N, one; (7), one; (9), 2; total 4.

Diving Petrel *Pelecanoides urinatrix*, B.P., N, 12; (6), 2; (9), 11; (11), 4; (12), 3; (13), 2; (14), 3; (16), 3; (18), one; (2), 11; total 62.

*Red-tailed Tropic Bird *Phaethon rubricauda*, once reported regularly cast up on beaches; none recorded of recent years.

Australian Gannet *Sula serrator*, B.P., N, 12; northern block, 10; east coast, 14; total 36. Seen offshore all round both peninsulas, generally in small numbers, but c. 100 in Rangaunu Bay, 11/7/70; three flying young with adults, north end of Tokerau Beach, 15/1/71.

Brown Booby *S. leucogaster*, B.P., (4), one.

*Blue-faced Booby *S. dactylatra*, seen west of North Cape, 1964 (Checklist).

Black Shag *Phalacrocorax carbo*. Sparsely distributed on coasts, harbours and lakes.

Pied Shag *P. varius*. Much commoner than *P. carbo*. Found all round the coastline and occasionally on freshwater lakes. Breeding reported at Whareana (2/116) and at Henderson Bay, 11/11/67 (D.E.C.).

Little Black Shag *P. sulcirostris*. Karikari Peninsula, Lakes Waiporohita (12 birds) and Rotokawau; Lake Waiparera, 29 on 12/1/71. (17), regular, in small numbers, with Little Shags in small mangroves; (H), reported.

Little Shag *P. brevirostris*. (R), common and breeding; (H), (P), present in smaller numbers; on lakes and rivers; occasional on ocean beaches. A gathering of Little Shags at Kaimaumau in November 1967 included 33% white-throated, 20% smudgy, 47% little pied (A.T.E.).

*Spotted Shag *Stictocarbo punctatus*. A bird in partial breeding plumage came ashore at Ahipara (south end of Ninety Mile Beach) on 4/9/69 and died the following day (E.M.). The nearest known breeding colony is at Oaia, about 135 miles to the south.

Lesser Frigate Bird *Fregata ariel*. Hurricane Rosie (3/1/71) brought several frigate birds to New Zealand waters. Houhora Heads, 4/1/71, two (Mr. Wagener), and two south of Reef Point (E.M.). About 5/1/71 three at Pataua, east of Whangarei. 6/1/71, three in Bay of Islands all day, seen flying north over Kerikeri Inlet at 1830 hrs. (K.R.). Mangonui harbour, 8/1/71, one and 9/1/71, two (G.R.). 13/1/71, one seen at Te Werahi. 15/1/71, a dead bird at Scott Point. The dead bird was identified as *F. ariel* and from the description the Mangonui birds were a male and female of this species. They spent much time soaring, were not seen to molest gulls, terns or gannets, but on two occasions flew down to take or investigate something on the water. When harried by Red-billed Gulls the speed of disengagement and upward movement was particularly noted; the tail was used as a rudder in flight. One of the Houhora birds landed on the beach and appeared to eat part of a dead fish. In Bay of Islands the frigate-birds soared over an area of water full of school fish and hunting birds; on several occasions they dived on the fishing birds but were not seen to fish for themselves.

White-faced Heron *Ardea novaehollandiae*. P, a few had settled by 1952 (17:12); now common, 48 in January 1971; 29/3/70, 65 (A.T.E.). R, 35 in January 1971; up to 100 have been counted (M.H.). H, present. Odd birds sighted at N, (4), (6), (8) and (20).

*White Heron *Egretta alba*. Reported from near (5), P and H (10:213); R, regular winter visitor, up to 40 recorded, 15 as late as January (Field Guide); in normal years present in small numbers, usually gone by October.

*Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*. P, (Field Guide); R, August 1954, two (6:91).

Reef Heron *Egretta sacra*. P, a flock of 30 in winter 1946 (2:116) was exceptional, but 11 on 22/1/69; breeding at North Head, 1968. H, breeding 1964 and 1965. R, 11, 1961. Recorded on ocean beaches 1967-71, N, Northern block, (19), (20). (A.T.E.).

*Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*. Just south of our area two spent 1966 winter on a farm three miles from Kaitaia (15:43).

Australian Bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus*. Generally distributed in swampy areas; recorded in 12 map squares and probably occurs in several additional localities.

*Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*. P, 15/12/57 (10:315).

*Royal Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*. P, R, 1957-59 (Field Guide).

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*. Breeds singly and in small groups on lakes throughout the northern peninsula; P, flocks of up to 300 in autumn and winter (2:116). Flocking had not started in January 1971. P, 30/3/71, 300; H, February 1961, 200 (A.T.E.).

*Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*. Ten birds visited Lake Waimimihau, a lagoon at the south end of Ninety Mile Beach, June 1969 (H.A.F.).

Paradise Duck *Tadorna variegata*. Seen near (8), two; (11), two; (12), ten; Lake Waiparera, two. P, breeding reported; winter flock on paddocks, 5/7/69, 18 (A.T.E.). Breeding also reported inland south of Houhora.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*. Not yet common in the Far North; breeding reported on a small lake near Houhora; sightings near North Cape and on Karikari Peninsula.

Grey Duck *Anas superciliosa*. Throughout, in moderate numbers. Sighted in several localities in northern block, around Houhora, 44 on Lake Waiparera and 41 on Lake Rotokawau.

*Grey Teal *Anas gibberifrons*. An unconfirmed report of this species on a lake south of Houhora, August 1970. Grey Teal turn up unexpectedly in other parts of Northland, e.g., Hikurangi (1968); Kerikeri, 29/5/70; Mangonui, 14/5/63, specimen in Auckland Museum (H.R.McK.).

Brown Teal *Anas chlorotis*. One on Lake Waiporohita; the species is holding its own in Bay of Islands and Whangaroa counties, but this may be the first record from Mangonui county.

N.Z. Scaup *Aythya novaeseelandiae*. Not common in 1947 (2:116). Lake Wahakari, 14/4/63, 20 (A.T.E.); 29/10/69, 8 (J.H.S.); January 1971, 3, but others may have been hidden in the lake edge.

Harrier *Circus approximans*. 24 map squares.

*N.Z. Falcon *Falco novaeseelandiae*. Once, Te Kao, about 1928 (2:116).

*Nankeen Kestrel *F. cenchroides*. Cape Reinga, 1969 (16:293).

Brown Quail *Synoicus ypsiliphorus*. 19 map squares.

Californian Quail *Lophortyx californicus*. Karikari Peninsula, common. Aupouri Peninsula, in 1947 only as far north as Te Kao (2:116), but in January 1971 recorded between Te Werahi and Spirits Bay, in several localities; total map squares, 16.

Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*. Throughout; 21 map squares.

Banded Rail *Rallus philippensis*. Recorded in three localities around Spirits Bay, Parengarenga, Te Kao; calling at Houhora; known to occur at Kaimaumau. Probably more widespread than these few records would indicate.

*Marsh Crake *Porzana pusilla*. Recorded at Lake Tangonge, Kaitaia, May 1948 (3:94); probably occurs on the peninsulas.

*Spotless Crake *P. tabuensis*. Once observed south of Te Kao (2:116). December 1964, a dead bird found on high tide line, Tokerau Beach (M.R.).

Pukeko *Porphyrio melanotus*. Recorded in 10 map squares on Aupouri and 3 on Karikari Peninsula; widespread but in small numbers, ranging as far north as Spirits Bay.

South Island Pied Oystercatcher *Haematopus finschi*. N, 4; P, one; H, 35; R, 29; total 69. Autumn influx had started; but no large numbers of *finschi* reach these northern harbours and most of them have gone by September.

Variable Oystercatcher *Haematopus reischeki*. Distributed all round the beaches on both peninsulas, and in three harbours. Total recorded c. 240, plus some running young; this is probably fewer than the full population; autumn and winter flocks, P, 29/3/70, 155; N, 3/5/70, 170 counted on beach (A.T.E.).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica fulva*. P, c. 100, including one albino; H, 6; R, 4; (20), 2; total c. 112. P, usually arrives in September, may build up to 150-200 in January-March, sometimes still present April. 1970-71 was a poor season for *dominica* in the Far North (A.T.E.). R, 1/11/69, 70; 3/11/70, none (J.H.S.).

N.Z. Dotterel *Charadrius obscurus*. N, 18; northern block, 64; east coast beaches and harbours, 140; total 222. A low count for N; some birds probably back in the dunes; highest recent count, 3/5/70, 60. P, autumn flocking on paddocks, 24/3/69, 76; 29/3/70, 115 (A.T.E.). R, 16/1/71, 32 plus four chicks on Rangiputa Bank, where c. 40 birds present on 1/11/69 and 3/11/70 (J.H.S., A.T.E.).

Banded Dotterel *Charadrius bicinctus*. N, 12; northern block, 53; P, 450; H, 16; R, 28; east coast beaches, 16; total 575. A small breeding population, with a big autumn and winter influx, especially at P, where at least 1000 were present on 30/1/71; 1970, March c. 1500; August 22nd, under 100; September to December, only odd pairs (A.T.E.).

*Oriental Dotterel *Charadrius veredus*. P, single birds in Feb. 1955 (77:26), March 1968 (15:211), and August 1969 (16:286).

Wrybill *Anarhynchus frontalis*. P, 6; H, 3; R, one; (19), 2; total 12. An autumn and winter visitor, never in large numbers; N, June 1969, 44; P, February 1968, 50; 24 still present as late as 27/9/68. Occasional, Tokerau Beach (A.T.E.). R, 17 on 2/11/69 were unusual (J.H.S.).

Long-billed Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*. P, 4. 1969/70, July-October, 4-5; January, 9; 25th April, 2. 1970/71, 22/8/70, 3; 20/9/70, 7; October-January, 4; 3/3/71, 2; 30/3/71, none (A.T.E.). R, 2/11/69, one (J.H.S.).

Asiatic Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus variegatus*. P, 31/8/69, 12; 4/9/69, 14; 27/10/69, 20; rest of season, only one bird seen.

6/10/70, 15; 20/10/70, 22; 18/11/70, 16; January 1971, 8; 30/1/71, one.

R, 1/11/69, 36 (J.H.S.); 22/1/70, 3 (S.R.); 2/11/70, one (J.H.S.).

*American Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*. P, two birds on 5/7/69 and 27/10/69 (A.T.E.); R, one on 2/11/70 (J.H.S.).

*Little Whimbrel *Numenius minutus*. P, 3/3/71, one (A.T.E.).

*Asiatic Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa melanuroides*. P, July-October 1969, two; R, 3/11/70, one (A.T.E.).

*American Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa haemastica*. P, 25/3/69, one (A.T.E.).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*. P, 1500; H, 1100; R, 3000; N, 20; sundry, 8; total 5628. 1968 March, 3000; July, 800; 1969, March, 2300; July, 500; occasional on beaches; N, 9/2/61, 77; (11), 11/11/67, 600 (A.T.E.).

*Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*. P, 1968/69, 3; 1969/70, one; H, 2/3/69, 3 (A.T.E.).

Siberian Tattler *Tringa brevipes*. P, 1950, 4-6; 1951, 2 (4:130); 1968/69 and 1969/70, 5 (A.T.E.); January 1971, 4.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*. P, one (present November to March, 1970/71); R, 1/11/69, one (J.H.S.).

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*. P, 800; H, 120; R, 240; N, 75; sundry, 80; total 1315. During the southward migration large numbers may be seen on beaches at R and (16), e.g., 6/11/67, 600; 6/9/70, 600 (A.T.E., D.E.C.). P, 1947, flocks up to 24 (2:116); 1950, 200 (4:133); 1962, 1000 (10:92); 29/3/70, 1100; 30/3/71, 1000+ (A.T.E.).

Knot *Calidris canutus*. P, 100; H, 2750; R, 60; N, 9; total 2919. Population shows much fluctuation; P, October 1969, 2100; January 1970, 850 (A.T.E.); R, 1/11/69, 2000 (J.H.S.); 22/1/70, none (S.R.).

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*. P, 10. 14 on 31/3/71. R, 1/11/69, one (J.H.S.); (16), 5/11/67, 12 at a stream mouth (T.R.C.).

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*. P, 7.

*White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*. P, 30/3/71, one (A.T.E.).

*Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri*. R, 3/11/70, one (A.T.E., J.H.S.).

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*. P, 24; R, one; total, 25. P, 23/3/69, 54 (A.T.E.). R, 1/11/69, 6 (J.H.S.).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*. R, one. P, 1950 and 1951 (4:127-128).

*Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*. P, Feb.-March 1970, one (A.T.E., A.G.).

Pied Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*. P, 146; H, 31 (one near-black); R, 224; N, 8; northern block, 32; east coast, 64; Lake Waiparera, 100; total 605. A late breeding pair at R; P, very few present September-December; autumn and winter numbers build up to 500-680 (A.T.E.).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*. Two sightings in Rangaunu Bay.

Black-backed Gull *Larus dominicanus*. 30 map squares; nowhere in large numbers.

Red-billed Gull *Larus scopulinus*. 32 map squares. Breeds at Rangiputa Bank, c. 20 pairs January 1958 (R.B.S.); c. 100 pairs 1969, c. 200 pairs 1970 (J.H.S.), and a small colony on the sandbank in Parengarenga harbour in 1970 (A.T.E.). Great numbers arrive in Aupouri Peninsula in autumn, from breeding grounds at Three Kings.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*. N, sight record, F. C. Kinsky.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*. Recorded all round the coast. P, breeding reported 1940-41 on white sand south of the heads (2:118), and probably a few still breed there. R, a breeding colony on Rangiputa Bank at least since 1957 (R.B.S.); 58 nests 9/10/69 (R.H.M.). 160 birds in colony 1/11/69, but only about 80 3/11/70, when eggs were being attacked by unemployed Red-billed Gulls (J.H.S.). 16/1/71, c. 250 birds on the bank, two swimming chicks. N, few in summer, but up to 40 in winter (A.T.E.).

*Crested Tern *Sterna bergii*. Spirits Bay, March 1951 (Check-list).

Eastern Little Tern *Sterna albirostris*. R, 12/1/58, one (R.B.S.); 1/11/69, 9 (J.H.S.); 22/1/70, 15 (S.R.); 3/11/70, 19 (J.H.S., A.T.E.); 16/1/71, 41 (record flock for N.Z.).

Some aspects of the behaviour of these Little Terns may be worthy of comment. As the launch approached Rangiputa Bank on 16/1/71, it was overtaken by two compact flocks of c. 9 and 12 Little Terns. They were flying fast and direct and looked like pale waders. Indeed at a distance they were at first mistaken for Turnstones! In the Firth of Thames, where Little Terns are regular summer visitors and have been observed for many years, they have never been seen flying in such tightly-knit flocks or with such purpose. On the island these Little Terns settled with others already there and moved but little while the tide was high, squatting low and becoming quite difficult to see. Then as the tide dropped, the flock broke up and small parties travelled many miles, feeding along the channels and sometimes resting near the water's edge well clear of the mangroves (R.B.S.).

White-fronted Tern *Sterna striata*. Recorded all round the coast. Not known at Parengarenga in 1947 (2:118); but c. 100 pairs bred on Rangiputa Bank 1957-58 (R.B.S.). November 1969 and 1970, a colony of 1500-2000 birds nested on Rangiputa Bank (J.H.S.) and a small colony, c. 150 birds, nested in Parengarenga Harbour on a sandbank Nov-Dec. 1970 (A.T.E.). Ninety Mile Beach, on a 29-mile stretch, 688, February 1961; 625, 13/5/69; 343, 29/6/69; July-August, only 6-64 (A.T.E.).

Sooty Tern *S. fuscata*. B.P., N, 2; (7), one; total 3.

*White-capped Noddy *Anous minutus*. Spirits Bay, one with White-fronted Terns, 10/1/65 (12:240).

*Grey Ternlet *Procelsterna cerulea*. Cape Maria van Diemen; off Cape Karikari, January 1951 (Checklist).

N.Z. Pigeon *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*. One at Unuwahao (a peak between Spirits and Tom Bowling Bays); two south of Tom Bowling Bay. 1969, one south of the western end of Spirits Bay; a few still present in remaining patches of forest in northern block.

*White Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*. Between August 1970 and January 1971 three birds reported at several localities between Houhora and Awanui (M.H. et al.).

*Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius*. December 1965, Mt. Camel (L.W.); 1965-1970, sparsely distributed as far north as Ngataki (A.T.E.).

*Parakeet sp. *Cyanoramphus* sp. One report of a parakeet on the forested slopes of Unuwahao, in the 1920's (2:118).

*Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus*. Te Kao, 18/12/52 (5:196).

Shining Cuckoo *Chalcites lucidus*. Regular in season. Heard January 1971 in four localities, Awanui-Spirits Bay.

Long-tailed Cuckoo *Eudynamis taitensis*. Te Kao, once 12 together, in rough weather (2:118); 25/2/70, dead bird picked up on Parengarenga block (A.T.E.); January 1971, two records, near Houhora.

Morepork *Ninox novaeseelandiae*. Present; silent around Houhora, January 1971.

Spine-tailed Swift *Chaetura caudacuta*. B.P., N, one. Awanui, 1967 (15:35); Ahipara and Awanui, 1969 (R.H.M., H.A.F.).

N.Z. Kingfisher *Halcyon sancta*. 28 map squares.

*Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus orientalis*. Te Kao, 1923 (2:118).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*. Common throughout; all map squares; P, nest, 5 eggs; R, abandoned egg on sandbank.

Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena*. 30 map squares.

Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*. 29 map squares. Widely distributed but much less plentiful than Skylark; feeding young, Karikari Peninsula, 15/1/71.

Hedge Sparrow *Prunella modularis*. 20 map squares; not recorded from the western squares which are mainly dunes or open grassland.

Fernbird *Bowdleria punctata*. 15 map squares; found in both peninsulas as far north as Te Werahi and North Cape areas; more than 10 birds seen in a small area, on a farm near Houhora (T.R.C.).

Grey Warbler *Gerygone igata*. 24 map squares.

Fantail *Rhipidura fuliginosa*. 20 map squares.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*. 25 map squares.

Blackbird *T. merula*. 25 map squares.

Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis*. 25 map squares.

Tui *Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*. A rare bird in the Far North. Mt. Camel, December 1965 (L.W.); Ngataki, north of Houhora, 27/10/69 (A.T.E.); January 1971, sighted south of Spirits Bay (west), south of Tom Bowling Bay, and near Kowhai Beach.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*. 23 map squares.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*. 26 map squares.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*. 6 map squares; three sightings, one of 5 birds, between Parengarenga and the north coast bays; near Houhora; Karikari Bay; Tokerau (south end).

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*. 19 map squares.

Redpoll *Acanthis flammea*. 10 map squares.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*. 24 map squares.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*. 23 map squares; throughout, in moderate numbers; flock of 200, Karikari peninsula. May suffer competition for nesting sites from Mynas.

Indian Myna *Acridotheres tristis*. 26 map squares. Spread has been rapid. Few on Aupouri Peninsula till 1967, when a flock of birds arrived at Houhora in October, immediately dispersed and began to breed; some as far north as Te Pahi and Spirits Bay by November 1967. By late 1968 they were all the way up the peninsula and 60 were counted in the north-eastern tip, around North Cape area. P, 40, July 1969; nesting in holes in sandstone cliffs, 1970 (G. Eller). Kerr Point, January 1971, 47.

CONCLUSION

A list of 137 birds (species and subspecies) from so small a part of New Zealand is remarkable enough; the prospect of adding to this list is exciting, and attainable if enough observers become available. There is no doubt that additional species of waders, rare stragglers and storm-cast specimens will sooner or later be recorded.



SHORT NOTES

A HITCHHIKING TURNSTONE

At 1300 hrs. on 11/11/70 in position 22° 12'S, 177° 26'E, that is approximately 120 miles south of Kandavu Island, a Turnstone was seen to fly aboard m.v. "Karamu."

The bird was apparently young, having much black about the head, and with legs a dull reddish orange. It was obviously very tired and sheltered from the wind by hiding behind the bolts on top of the after hatch, as though these bolts were stones on a beach. After resting for some hours it took up quarters on a net spread out on the hatch, where, as can be seen from the photograph, it merged completely with the background.

It remained on board, except for short flights around the ship, for the next 3 days 17 hours, during which time it was carried 900 miles to the south. When it finally left, the vessel was just south of Tiri Tiri Island.

Whilst the Turnstone was on board everyone was feeding it and amongst the foods seen to be eaten were raw and cooked meat, pieces of raw fat, raw and fried fish, bread, biscuits, mashed and chipped potatoes, banana, and uncooked rice. On one occasion it was given a fresh flying fish and the bird pecked out both of the eyes and was seen to be pecking continuously inside the gills. A shallow pan of fresh water was put on the hatch and in this the